

Frances M. Mackay House
10 Follen Street
Cambridge
Middlesex County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-1026

HABS
MASS
9-CAMB
27-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

FRANCES M. MACKAY HOUSE

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Location: 10 Follen Street, Cambridge, Middlesex County,
Massachusetts

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lee Wolff

Present Use: Private residence

Statement of
Significance: This building is a fine example of a symmetrical
Stick Style suburban house of the 1870's, in
pristine condition.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1875.
2. Architect: Peabody and Stearns. (Robert Swain Peabody,
1845-1917; John Goddard Stearns, 1843-1917)
3. Original and subsequent owners: References are to Middle-
sex County Registry of Deeds and Probate.

- 1871 Frances M. Mackay bought land (approximately 12,000
square feet) at 10 Follen Street from Henry P.
Walcott. Deed Book 1162, p. 555. House ("new,
unfinished") first appears on city tax records in
1875, assessed to Frances M. Mackay.
- 1879 Frances M. Mackay sold to her brother, Tristram B.
Mackay, "one undivided half in land and buildings."
Deed Book 1527, p. 423.
- 1884 At the death of Tristram B. Mackay, his half of land
and buildings reverted to Frances M. Mackay. Probate
17556.
- 1894 At the death of Frances M. Mackay, land and house
were bequeathed to Amelia Mackay Goodwin. Probate
38083.
- 1914 At the death of Amelia Mackay Goodwin, land and
house were bequeathed to her brother, Hersey
Bradford Goodwin, with provision that land and
house go to his children if he should die before
she. Probate 99721.

- 1914 At the death of H.B. Goodwin, land and house were divided into four equal shares and one share transferred to each of his children: Elliot Henry Goodwin, Amelia Goodwin Greenough, Grace Goodwin Read, and Frances Goodwin Johnson. Probate 100285.
- 1915 Grace Goodwin Read acquired land and house from the other three children. Deed Book 3918, p. 132.
- 1950 After the death of Grace Goodwin Read, Robert Lee Wolff and Mary Andrew Wolff bought land and house. Deed Book 7603, p. 64.

4. Alterations and additions: References are to building permits.

1955 (54957) Front and rear porches repaired; front steps refurbished. Contractor: W.G. Butman.

1965 (64321) Front porch repaired. Contractor: Harry E. Burke & Sons, Inc.

Minor changes (often evident when compared to published view and plan of 1877)

Exterior:

Steps to front veranda different now from published view, lacking lower horizontal projection.

Front steps now have iron railing, installed by the Wolffs, to replace a decayed wooden one not shown in view.

Wooden railing around front veranda roof removed by the Wolffs, parts are preserved in basement larder.

Vertical boarding below first and second floor windows, as shown in view, is not present, perhaps never executed. Zone is demarcated, but has horizontal clapboarding.

House now has shutters, which 1877 view does not show.

Pantry stoop has been changed slightly from 1877 view, it is approached by a straight run going north-south rather than east-west and the overhanging roof shows no sign of the 45° brace depicted in the old view.

The pyramidal roof over the kitchen wing lacks any finial. A finial similar to those on the front of the house is preserved in the basement larder and may have been on this roof.

Kitchen fenestration has been changed. Between the two sash windows shown on the plan, a third has been inserted

by the Wolffs.

A narrow rear porch has now been replaced by a large modern deck by the Wolffs, c. 1964.

Interior:

Most of the woodwork, including door-frames, but excluding doors, on first floor has been painted white by the Wolffs.

The Wolffs have installed a modern bath in the coat closet beneath the front stairs.

The two arches, newel column, brackets, and stair post finials illustrated in the 1877 view have been removed by the Wolffs, but most of the carved pieces, such as the paired ornately carved capitals, are preserved in the basement larder.

The back hall, which has two closets and a bath to the east on the published plan, was remodeled at some time prior to 1951 into a conservatory with a large glass door at the south end.

The library fireplace was replaced by the Wolffs.

The passage from the kitchen to china closet has been changed into a regular doorway.

The pantry and vestibule to the rear have been joined as one long room with no interior divisions, entered by one center door opposite the stove, now used as a laundry.

The front vestibule now has a coat closet to the east and shelf to the west, installed by the Wolffs.

The modern bathroom on the third floor was added by the Wolffs.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

None known.

C. Bibliography:

American Architect and Building News, Vol. 2, No. 55, January 1877, p. 13.

Plate shows exterior view of house, interior stair-hall, and first floor plan.

Bowen, Maria. "Reminiscences of Follen Street." In Publications, Vol. 20, Proceedings for the Years 1927, 1928, 1929, Cambridge Historical Society, p. 99. Cambridge, Massachu-

setts, 1934.

Rettig, Robert Bell. Guide to Cambridge Architecture: Ten Walking Tours. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1969.

Prepared by Susan E. Maycock
Survey Associate
Cambridge Historical
Commission
June 20, 1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Frances M. Mackay House is a handsome and well preserved example of the Stick Style, designed in 1875 by Peabody and Stearns, which retains most of its original trim.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The house is a square block, 40 feet (three bays) x 40 feet (three bays), excluding side bays, ells, and veranda, two-and-a-half stories. There is a narrow veranda across the entire front and a kitchen wing at the southeast corner of the block.
2. Foundations: Brick foundations, about 3-1/2 feet to grade of 15 courses laid in common bond. Below grade, is about 6 feet of rough-laid bluestone, plastered over in basement. Front veranda has wooden foundations. At east and west ends are cut-out six-pointed star pattern. Basement has brick dividing walls and support pillars.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Clapboards, 3-1/2 inches wide, with horizontal division strips running below the windows of each floor which form a type of string course, approximately twice the dimensions of the clapboards. Base of wall flares out at about 45° angle over the foundation. The gable end of the front pavilion has two panels with X-beams, similar to half-timbering, on a background of vertical boarding. Above this, partially hidden by the support beams of the gable, is vertical board and batten with pointed edge. House is painted grey with front stoop and roof railing painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: Stud framing.

5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Front veranda runs across entire front of house, approximately 40 feet x 10 feet, with pierced railing around edge. Central canopy, approximately 10 feet x 12 feet, has six support posts and brackets flanking panels of pierced designs in a circular pattern and quatrefoil pattern. Side arches have turned pendants. Veranda is reached by straight run of 5 risers. Pantry stoop has landing approximately 4 feet square on a slatted foundation, reached by 5 risers. Cellar entry has uncovered run of 6 risers, opening approximately 4 feet x 6 feet. Opening is framed at ground level with light grey granite monoliths, approximately 10 inches x 5-1/2 inches x 4 or 5 feet, resting on a brick foundation. Rear porch, a modern addition, is a large deck, approximately 30 feet x 12 feet, apparently of cypress wood resting on concrete piers.
6. Chimneys: Four rectangular chimneys, inside roof line, of red brick, corbeled out near the top, with a band of angled bricks on end near opening. A cross-shaped boss is on several faces.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Double door in front has upper panels of leaf glass with etched ribbon border and lower wooden rectangular panels. Transom of four square lights has X-shaped mullions. Cellar door has four wooden panels. Side door, which does not appear to be original, has two vertical panels with three horizontal lights above. Glass door of 18 panes in rear, with transom and full length sidelights.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Most windows are two-over-two lights except some which are one-over-one paired within one enframingent, as the sewing room of the second floor, the front pavilion, and the west side dormers. Two floor length windows onto back porch are triple hung sash with 6 lights. Cellar windows have three panes set horizontally with wooden sill and simple surround, but rear cellar windows are two-over-two lights. Window at rear stair between first and second floor is one-over-one light. All windows have plain strip frames. Shutters, possibly not original, are painted black.
8. Roof: A Mansard with flat top projects beyond wall line approximately 2 feet. Flat deck is surrounded by a wooden railing. Roof is covered with grey-green rectangular slate. Projecting eaves of roof are supported at corners by a single bracket on each face. Between first and second floors is a second projecting eave with a slate covering of four courses, which is carried around front and sides forming the eaves for front porch and bay windows. It

is supported by smaller brackets at corners and above edges of windows, including bay windows. Rain-gutter is concealed in upper eaves. There are seven dormers: two with gable ends at front (north); others with truncated gables, 1 east, 2 west, 2 south; with brackets at edges. Front bay capped by a gable with finial and bargeboards. Pyramidal roof over kitchen wing.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Under kitchen wing there is a finished room with wooden floor. West of basement stairs is servants' bath with a water closet, basin, and zinc lined tub, now painted. Several coal bins are located in main part of cellar. A provisions larder is located under southwest corner of house.
 - b. First floor: Arrangement is the same as on the 1877 plan except for changes noted above. Dimensions of the rooms are approximately as follows: vestibule, 4-1/2 feet deep; dining room, 15 feet x 15 feet excluding bay; library, 18 feet x 18 feet excluding bay; parlor, 18 feet x 24 feet excluding bay; rear hall, 13 feet long; main hall, 8 feet wide and 23 feet from vestibule entrance to rear hall entrance; east-west dimension from stairhall water closet to opposite wall is 14 feet; kitchen, 15 feet x 18 feet; pantry is 6 feet wide.
 - c. Second floor: East side has two bedrooms connected by ample wardrobes with interconnecting doors, front bedroom is now the second library; a sewing room is over the vestibule and front hall with an upper hall and rear stairs and bath behind the sewing room; west side has two bedrooms with a wardrobe and bath between the rooms.
 - d. Third floor: Two bedrooms on front; one bedroom at west rear; bath at rear; storage attic (with former water tank) and stairs to east.
2. Stairways: The front stairs have eight risers, landing, five risers, landing, and seven risers; forming a half-turn. From second to third floors, the stairs have four risers, landing, six risers, landing, and seven risers. There are turned balusters, square posts, and a large square newel post. The posts are incised with fleur-de-lis pattern with rosettes above as center flower. The rear stairs form half-turn with winders and 19 risers. Basement stairs form half-turn with winders and 15 risers with extra step added at bottom totaling 16

risers. A ladder which can be lowered gives access to roof from third floor.

3. Flooring: In the early 20th century, Mrs. Wolff relates, most of the floors were relaid over the pine, in parquetry. Thus the first floor is all in hard wood. Upper floors are pine, painted black.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The basement provisions larder has walls of horizontal tongue and groove board with plaster ceiling. The natural dark wood walls throughout the house were painted white by the Wolffs, to lighten the interior. Front hall has 36-inch wainscoting and baseboard of mahogany (according to Mrs. Wolff) separated from chair railing by an area covered by cloth. Architraves of doors have reeded molding with square corner blocks. Moderately heavy ceiling cornice molding on first floor, only slim picture-molding on second floor, none on third floor. On first floor, ceiling medallions are of a very simple, unornamented circular type.
5. Doorways and doors: Most doors have four panels, with moldings around panels, they appear to be of well-maintained mahogany veneer. Between living room and study are 6-foot wide hinged double doors, each with four panels. Kitchen door and all doors on second and third floors are painted. Double vestibule inner door has 16 panes in each leaf. On the second floor on the south side of the west hall is the location of a door, that lead into a closet. It has been plastered over on the hall side, but not within the closet; the closet now connects to the bath and the bedroom. The interior side is not painted, and is similar to first floor doors, but made of a yellow-tan wood, perhaps oak. Basement larder has vertical tongue and groove door.
6. Decorative features and trim: Door enframements and wainscoting are described above. As seen on 1877 drawing, staircase was elaborately treated with a double arch, now removed. The second floor wardrobes are separated by a sliding door; each having built-in closets, shelves, drawers, and coat hooks. Modern shelving is found on walls of library, sewing room, and northeast bedroom. Other shelving is located throughout the house. Basement larder has shelves on east wall.
7. Hardware: Sewage pipe in basement marked "Pat. Oct. 5, 1897." Doorknobs on first floor are glass with silvered interiors; ward locks and turn bolt lock on doors. Third floor has black porcelain knobs. Basement larder has meat hooks and two other hooks in ceiling on wood strip.

8. Lighting: Originally gas. The dining room chandelier was originally in the study, the other chandeliers from the dining room and living room are stored in the basement larder, unconverted to electricity. Hanging etched glass fixture in front hall is original. Gas butts are located throughout house. Also stored in the basement larder are several boxes of cut and etched glass gas lamp globes, a number of plain extendable tubular gas fixtures which were converted to electricity, and some extraordinarily fine gilded gas brackets with cast winged sphinxes recumbent on the projecting arm. These and the more elaborate chandelier were apparently from the living room.
9. Heating: Modern heating is by oil furnace. Hot air is admitted to rooms via floor grates set in square or rectangular soapstone surrounds. Two of the rooms on the third floor have no heat. The present library fireplace is from an 18th century house in Maine, and replaces one that Mrs. Wolff says was very elaborate and juttet well out into the room, but of which no pictures were taken. The dining room has a fireplace of yellow marble with black marble (or some other black shiny unveined stone) trim. Living room fireplace is of heavy white marble with two heavy Ionic columns supporting mantle. Iron grate, inner frame, and hearth frame appear to be original, but marble work does not appear to date from period of house. Kitchen has a large iron stove, but later than the house. It has somewhat Rococo designs and is inscribed: "Cyrus Carpenter & Co. Boston," and below, "Carpenter's Range, Boston Mass. 1909." In the room directly below, this stove is supported on a corbeled brick support. Fireplace of second floor study, in northeast corner, is of simple grey marble and has a large opening with rounded corners with rudimentary bracket-keystone. Fireplace of northwest bedroom is of grey-white marble with arched fireplace opening and elaborate keystone-modillion. Fireplace of southwest bedroom is simple grey-white marble in rectangular pieces with beveled panels. Fireplace of southeast rear bedroom is of white marble with arched opening. Fireplaces in living room, dining room, northwest bedroom and southeast rear bedroom are for coal.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Front faces north-northwest. House is set on large lot with numerous trees and shrubs. Rear of house looks onto small grove of trees.
2. Outbuildings: None.
3. Landscaping, walks, enclosures: Driveway to kitchen wing on east side.

Prepared by Daniel D. Reiff
Survey Associate
Cambridge Historical
Commission
February 29, 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a cooperative project between the Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC), Albert B. Wolfe, Chairman, and the Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service. The project followed a previous one conducted during the summer of 1964 under the same auspices and was initiated in September 1967 and completed in June 1969. It was under the general direction of Robert Bell Rettig, Associate Survey Director of the CHC, and James C. Massey, Chief, HABS. Miss Susan Maycock, CHC Survey Associate and graduate student in architectural history at Boston University, was responsible for the historical data; the architectural data was written by Daniel D. Reiff, CHC Survey Associate who was at that time a Harvard University doctoral candidate in the Department of Fine Arts; and the photographs were taken by George M. Cushing, Boston. Certain data was supplied by Dr. Bainbridge Bunting, CHC Survey Director and Professor of Art and Architectural History at the University of New Mexico. These records were edited by Denys Peter Myers, Principal Architectural Historian, HABS, and Deborah Stephens, Architectural Historian, HABS.